



HOW TO...

Back up your hard disk

It's only when your hard disk fails that you realise how important your files really are. Simon Edwards shows you how to make sure your vital files are always within easy reach, even if the worst does happen



If your hard disk dies, you will lose all your personal files as well as your Windows installation and all your programs. Programs can be replaced, though it can be a time-consuming, frustrating reinstallation process, but your personal files are often irreplaceable.

Here we'll show you how to save everything on your hard disk by creating a backup that completely restores your PC should your hard disk fail or some other disaster wipe your files.

Acronis True Image creates exact copies of entire disks and disk partitions. Unlike normal disk-partitioning utilities, it can also save copies of data, as well as just the data that has changed since the previous backup. This is called an incremental backup, and it saves time and disk space.

The version of Acronis TrueImage free on this month's cover disc creates full backups and copies them to another internal hard disk. The full version of Acronis True Image, a trial version of which is also on the cover disc, can save full and incremental backups to an external USB or FireWire hard disk, as well as a full range of CD-RW and writable DVD drives and even to shared folders on your network.

1 Install the software and, if you have a CD-R drive, insert a blank CD when prompted. This will create a bootable CD that you can use to help recover your system if something goes wrong.

2 In our system we have two hard disks. The C: drive holds Windows, programs and our data files. Drive E: is a second hard disk for backup purposes and drive D: is our CD-RW drive.

To create a backup of the files on drive C:, either follow the setup wizard or run TrueImage Deluxe from the Start menu and choose the 'Create an image of a partition or the whole hard disk drive' option. You will be asked which drive you want to save. We've chosen the C: drive. The drive you choose will be underlined in red.

You also need to specify where the disk image will be saved. In our example, we've chosen the E: drive. The disk image file will be called C-Backup.tib. Click the Next button to continue.

3 True Image allows you to choose how much compression you want to apply to the image file. Compressing it a great deal will save disk space but slow down the process, while having no compression will take up a lot of space. Using no compression isn't necessarily faster,

though, and the backup can actually take longer than when using a small amount of compression. Play with the settings, and keep an eye on the estimated file size and time details in the window below. We have stuck with the default setting of 3.

4 If you're going to save the image file to CD, you'll need to split it. Acronis True Image does this automatically, or you can choose a fixed size if you prefer. We're saving to a hard disk, though. Leave the setting at the default of Auto and then click Next. Add a password to protect the disk image from prying eyes, and add memo notes to the image too. These can come in handy when it's time to restore your system; the notes could help you decide which image to use.

Click Next, and you'll be presented with a summary screen and a button labelled Proceed. Click it to create the disk image.

5 TrueImage Deluxe can create a disk image of your Windows partition or drive even while you're running Windows, so you can keep using your PC as it works. The full version can also be scheduled to create disk images at certain times of the day, week or month. After this disk image has been created, you can run the wizard again and choose to create an incremental backup but, again, this works only with the full version.

6 Should you lose your data from the Windows disk or partition, you'll need to restore it from the backup file on your backup disc. If you created a bootable CD in Step 1 you can boot the PC from it and begin the restoration process. Otherwise, you will have to reinstall Windows and TrueImage Deluxe and use the Windows version of TrueImage Deluxe to get your files back.

Once the PC has booted from the CD, choose the Restore Image option. A wizard will start and ask for the image file you want to restore. Navigate to the backup file you named in Step 2. Although we saved this file on drive E:, it now appears in drive D: because Windows allocates drive letters differently from Acronis's bootable CD.

Click Next until you reach the screen that asks which partition you want to restore. Tick the box next to drive C:. Keep clicking Next, accepting the default settings and, when prompted, highlight the partition to which the backup should be copied. This is the first partition on disk 1. Accept all further default options. Finally, click the Proceed button to restore your Windows and data files. **ES**

